



CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

FAMILY STORIES OF HOPE, AWARENESS, AND THEIR CHILDHOOD CANCER JOURNEYS

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SUMMER SURPRISES!

15 YEARS LATER: SURVIVING INTO ADULthood

by Courtney Blum, 18 years old

Many people have events in their lives that change them forever. My experience has had an impact on not only myself, but those who love me as well. At just three years old, I did not understand the severity of the changes my life was about to undergo. Having cancer at a young age profoundly impacted my life, because without that, I would not be who I am today.

In June of 2005, what seemed be an innocent stomach virus turned out to be much more than expected. I was rushed to Texas Children's Hospital (TCH) when an ultrasound revealed a large tumor on my kidney. After surgery and pathology reports, I was diagnosed with Stage III Wilms' Tumor. This diagnosis required surgery to remove my kidney and the tumor, a port placement, abdominal radiation, and seven months of outpatient chemotherapy. I spent thirteen days in the hospital and returned weekly for treatments.

After almost eight months, my port was removed, and I was considered cancer free. I started kindergarten like all kids my age and was loving being a carefree child again. In October, a scan revealed my worst nightmare. I had to check out of school and start in-patient treatment for Stage IV Metastatic Wilms' Tumor. After a lung surgery and port replacement, I began to have heart problems. My mom would lie awake at night listening to my heartbeat on monitors, wondering if it would be my last; she wanted to be awake if my heart ever stopped.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 27, 2019 @ ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL

A TOAST TO CANDLELIGHTERS

OCTOBER 4, 2019

CAMP CLIFF WEEKEND

OCTOBER 11-13, 2019

FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 27, 2019 @ ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL

HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM

OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2019

Parent Support Group Meetings

SUPPORT GROUP MEETING AT MD ANDERSON CHILDREN'S CANCER HOSPITAL

EVERY WEDNESDAY 11:30 AM TO 1:00 PM
MD ANDERSON CHILDREN'S CANCER HOSPITAL
PEDI IN-PATIENT UNIT, RONALD McDONALD HOUSE ROOM
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (713) 606-5471

SUPPORT GROUP MEETING AT TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

EVERY WEDNESDAY 1:00 PM TO 2:00 PM
TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - WEST TOWER
RONALD McDONALD'S KITCHEN - 9TH FLOOR
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (832) 822-1415

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15 YEARS LATER: SURVIVING INTO ADULTHOOD

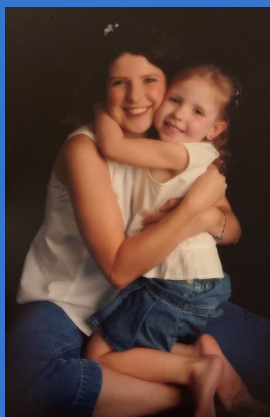
by Courtney Blum

(Continued from cover) For the next year, I was admitted into the hospital every three weeks for chemotherapy and total lung radiation. I lost all my hair due to the harsh chemo I was given. The chemo caused my immune system to be so compromised that I was unable to complete treatment. We had to hope and pray for the best. My home life was greatly impacted by daily doctor visits and blood infusions. My mom, sister, and I learned to make our own fun at home away from crowds and people who potentially could make me sick. Our new version of fun was just enjoying life outside of the hospital walls. We would play games and I would finally be able to have friends over to play with me and my sister. We would just try to come up with anything to keep my mind off of what I was going through.

Both Candlelighters and my team at TCH worked to make the holidays I spent in the hospital as happy as possible, but nothing felt like home. I never really knew that all children didn't live like this. This lifestyle just became my new normal for the next few years of my young life. My mom always told me I was special, but I never really knew what she meant by that. Looking back, I know she said this because of what I was going through. She made it her goal to make sure I was always happy and never really knew how sick I was. Throughout my whole treatment, I never saw my mom cry once. She always made sure I stayed positive and strong in my faith even through the toughest of times. She was my lifesaver in this journey, and for that, I will never be able to thank her enough.

My struggles in the past helped me learn what my purpose in life is. I feel this journey has led me to be a witness to others about the power of prayer and how valuable life is. This is why I stay active in childhood cancer organizations like Candlelighters. I hope to raise awareness every September for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. I will continue to volunteer at camps as a counselor to help other kids dealing with the same struggles I have faced. I hope to raise money for research to help cure childhood cancer.

In the future, I plan to devote my life in making sure no child has to go through this struggle alone. I would like to go to college and explore career opportunities that will enable me to make a difference in the life of a child with cancer. Whether in research or in treatment, I will have valuable insight into what my patients are dealing with and the impact it will make on their lives, just as it did mine. Though the struggles I faced left me with long-term side effects, I choose to focus on the positive lessons that surviving cancer has taught me. Cancer took a lot from me, but in the end, I gained more than I lost. I want to shine a positive light on the world as a survivor of childhood cancer, which has made me who I am today.



CAMP CLIFF: A WEEKEND THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES

by Cathy Blum

When my daughter Courtney was diagnosed with Stage III Wilms' Tumor at the young age of three, I was pretty sure life would never be the same for our family. Understanding what life would be with an immunocompromised child, I immediately knew that we could no longer function socially as we had before her diagnosis. All of the sudden, we were isolated from friends and family. We were different. I cringed at the thought of any germ-ridden kids coming around her getting her sick - something I never really thought twice about before.



When the staff and other families at Texas Children's Hospital spoke of camps and social activities for Courtney and our family, I really thought that would be something we would experience way down the road, long after all her chemotherapy and treatments were completed. When we were invited to Candlelighters' Camp CLIFF, I wasn't sure we were ready -- especially when I found out that we would be sleeping in different cabins! Up until that point, Courtney and I had never spent a night apart from each other before!

Despite my reservations, we took the leap and attend Candlelighters Camp CLIFF family camp weekend. When we arrived, I was blown away by how kind everyone was. There were so many things to do! I began to realize just how protective I had become over Courtney. But at Camp CLIFF, I was able to let my guard down quickly. Although she was bald, no one stared or treated her differently; we didn't feel like the outcast family. This was where we belonged! I went to every activity to take pictures of her having so many new experiences, and to assure her I was there, while also attending all of the different activities for the moms.

The next year Courtney's sister Riley was old enough to come. They both had a hard time being away from me, and I ran all over the camp trying to be at everything. It was exhausting, but very rewarding to see my girls interact with other children who had cancer and their siblings. They never wanted camp to be over! They have slowly grown up and have needed me less and less at camp each year. Thirteen years later, I no longer have to sneak in to their cabins at night and help them fall sleep.

Now I get to spend more time with friends of my own; friends that I have made through this camp getaway experience with Candlelighters. This is the only place I go where people understand our unique struggles and constant worries. My favorite part of camp is staying up late and talking with other cancer moms about past experiences during original diagnoses, dealing with relapses, and how we now live with the side effects of cancer treatment.

Camp CLIFF is the highlight of our year. No extravagant vacation could ever match what we experience at camp every year. This is Courtney's last year as a camper and she is really sad about it! But, she hopes to transition to a volunteer role, and then attend as a counselor after she fulfills her dream of becoming a nurse! Camp CLIFF has truly been life changing for us. We are forever grateful to Candlelighters for all they have done for our family, during and long after treatment.



For more information about Camp CLIFF (Children Loved In Families Forever), please visit candle.org/family-events/camp-cliff.

CAMP CLIFF *Sponsorship Opportunities*

Camp CLIFF (Children Loved In Families Forever) is our opportunity to provide Candlelighters families a weekend away from the "cancer bubble" to relax, unplug, enjoy unique camp experiences, and connect with other families who have been on a similar childhood cancer journey. As you will read in this special Childhood Cancer Awareness Month issue, Camp CLIFF is a highlight and forever-memory for families; it is their chance to catch a breath and "feel normal" again as they enjoy the fresh air out at Camp For All, just an hour outside of Houston. To ensure that this is the best weekend ever for our families, we rely on sponsors and donors to underwrite various aspects and activities during our camp weekend. **With your help**, we can provide life-long cherished memories for children with cancer and their families. Please see the sponsorship levels below and consider supporting this year's 'Wild West Weekend' at Camp CLIFF! **The Camp CLIFF weekend is October 11-13, 2019.**

<i>Party Sponsor</i>	\$50	<i>DECORATIONS & FOOD FOR SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY</i>
<i>Cabin Sponsor</i>	\$100	<i>HELP VOLUNTEER COUNSELORS DECORATE THEIR CABINS</i>
<i>Camper Sponsor</i>	\$200	<i>SEND 1 CAMPER TO CAMP CLIFF</i>
<i>Art Barn Sponsor</i>	\$500	<i>HELP US PURCHASE ART MATERIALS FOR CAMP CRAFTS</i>
<i>Family Sponsor</i>	\$800	<i>SEND A WHOLE FAMILY TO CAMP CLIFF</i>
<i>Entertainment Sponsor</i>	\$1,000	<i>SPONSOR FRIDAY NIGHT ENTERTAINMENT FOR CAMPERS</i>
<i>T-shirt Sponsor</i>	\$1,500	<i>PRINTING OF CAMP CLIFF T-SHIRTS *One more available!</i>
<i>Fireworks Sponsor</i>	\$2,000	<i>SPONSOR THE FIREWORKS SHOW FOR SATURDAY NIGHT</i>
<i>Jolly Cart Sponsor</i>	\$2,500	<i>SPONSOR GOLF CART TRANSPORTATION FOR CAMPERS</i>
<i>Fill-The-Cabins Sponsor</i>	\$3,000	<i>SEND 15 KIDS & FAMILY MEMBERS TO CAMP</i>



To sponsor one of the above areas at camp, please contact Program Director Carly Bradshaw at cbradshaw@candle.org or 713.270.4700 **in September**. To send a gift of any amount to support Camp CLIFF, please make checks out to Candlelighters and mail to Candlelighters, 12919 Southwest Freeway, Suite 100, Stafford Texas 77477. **All donations are tax deductible.**

1,217 DAYS IN BATTLE

by Kim Rex

Lane. He's the baby of our three boys, the one who completed our family. Since the day he was born, he has kept us on our toes. He took his first steps at 10 months old and has been full-blast ever since. He's always been fearless, a little stubborn, a lot wild, and loves the outdoors and giving me near-heart attacks every day. He is all boy!



In July of 2015, a week before Lane turned four, we noticed bruising on his legs; as the days passed, the bruising spread to his arms and lower back. We just knew it was because he was such an active little boy, so we decided to wait until the bruises faded... but they never did. He complained of lower leg pain, but don't all kids complain of growing pains? He was still full of energy and being his typical self, just one that was covered in bruises.

On August 7, I noticed pinpoint bruises (petechiae) all over his body. The next day, I took him to his pediatrician, and after blood work we were immediately sent to Driscoll Children's Hospital in Corpus Christi. In just a few short hours, our lives would forever change with a few words: "We're talking leukemia." It is impossible to accurately describe the feelings when I heard those words. Our world felt as though it was crashing down around us. I have never felt pain in the depths of my soul like I did that day.

Lane was immediately flown to Texas Children's Hospital here in Houston and was placed in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. His life was hanging by a thread and he was in critical condition. His white blood cell count was 617,000 (normal range for his age is 4,000-11,000), and his tiny body was ravaged with cancer. We sat with doctors in his room until early the next morning; for hours upon hours we signed consent forms, talked extensively about what was to come, and we went over all possible side effects, including death. Pheresis doctors told us they needed to start a procedure called leukapheresis and explained to us that they only do this at Texas Children's two to three times a year. This would remove many of the white blood cells from Lane's body and immediately following, he would start chemotherapy. Lane was later officially diagnosed with 'very high risk pre-b cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia' and we would later learn that he had a genetic mutation (MLL) which was rare in his age group. Our beautiful baby was beginning the fight of his life and our world as we knew it would be radically changed.

After his PICU stay, Lane was moved to the pediatric oncology floor at TCH, and this is where Candlelighters showed up for our family. Two of the sweetest ladies quietly walked into our room where my baby slept and my heart ached. They sat with me and offered genuine empathy, love, and help. They came with mom hearts that knew exactly how mine felt because their babies had battled cancer, too. And since that day, Candlelighters has remained consistent. What do I love most about them? Not only have they been there for Lane, but also for his big brothers. So often, siblings are forgotten because the focus is solely on the sick child, but Candlelighters has made sure to make siblings feel included and loved along the journey. When one fights, the entire family fights.

Lane and I never went back to Corpus Christi after his diagnosis. We sold our home there and moved our family to Houston to give him the best possible chance at life. He battled for 1,217 days; and he did so with a big smile plastered across his face and rarely a complaint. He taught us to smile even when it hurts, to have joy even in the midst of great pain, to enjoy the simple things, to love harder, to give more, and that life is a very precious gift.

Today, Lane is a big, healthy, hilarious 8-year-old. He is fierce, he's brave, and he has more compassion and empathy than any other 8-year-old I know. He just started second grade this year, loves baseball, skateboarding, wrestling with his big brothers, lounging with his dogs, and still thoroughly enjoys giving me near-heart attacks every day! Lane is our walking, talking, breathing miracle boy. We are eternally grateful for his life and every person that helped us through his journey.



CANCER: A SIBLING'S PERSPECTIVE

by Landon Rex, 11 years old

My name is Landon Rex, and when I was 6 years old my brother was diagnosed with cancer. The day Lane was diagnosed, I knew nothing about leukemia. Pretty soon after, we had to move away from my friends and my school. We even had to leave our home; I never got to live in my house again. Everything I knew vanished in a single second. It hurt a lot.

When my brother was in the hospital, I didn't get to see him very much. My mom was always gone with him and my dad had to work. I am happy I had my grandparents to help me and help take care of me, but I missed my mom and dad so much. School was difficult because I always thought about my brother and how my mom and dad were gone. I had to make new friends and change schools two times. It stunk!

As the war against Lane's cancer raged on, I felt hopeless and scared. Some days I thought, "This is it, my brother might die." He was in and out the hospital a lot and I felt confused; I really didn't understand everything that was going on. I just knew I wanted my family back home and I wanted Lane to be better. I wanted everything to go back to normal like it was before cancer came into our lives.

And then watching my brother fight, I saw how brave he was and thought I could be brave like him. He ran around Texas Children's Hospital like a wild person. He made me smile. I really liked the people that took care of my brother at Texas Children's. I knew he was in good hands.

Candlelighters has helped me through my brother's cancer journey so much. Camp CLIFF was my favorite thing that we've done as a family! We got to get away from cancer and have fun for three days! We got to be a normal family! And I got to make new friends just like me! Other siblings of kids with cancer. Sometimes things don't go the way we want, but watching my brother fight cancer made me a better person. I love him and I'm thankful he's better now.



We are thankful to the Rex family for sharing their stories with us for this special Childhood Cancer Awareness Month newsletter issue! Landon's perspective as the sibling of a child fighting cancer is a valuable one; often times, the focus and effort is placed on getting their sibling well. But everyone's worlds are turned upside down by a childhood cancer diagnosis - the patient, the parents, and the siblings. The stress and struggles of siblings walking alongside their loved one with cancer are real, raw, and important to acknowledge. This is why Candlelighters serves the whole family throughout their entire cancer journey and beyond. Just as the patient's life is forever changed, so are the family members' lives, and we believe no one in the family should have to go through this experience alone. We love to see siblings connect at our events and weekend sleepaway camp, Camp CLIFF, as Landon mentions above. We strive to provide opportunities for each member of the family to find someone "just like me" - those connections are invaluable and irreplaceable! **If you would like to submit your story to be featured in a future newsletter, please email Program Director Carly Bradshaw at cbradshaw@candle.org.**

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME!

Kicking Off Summer with The Sugar Land Skeeters

In a joint effort by the **Sugar Land Skeeters** baseball team and long-time sponsor and supporter **Constellation Energy**, over 350 Candlelighters family members were treated to a night full of fun out at the Constellation Field stadium to kick off the beginning of summer!

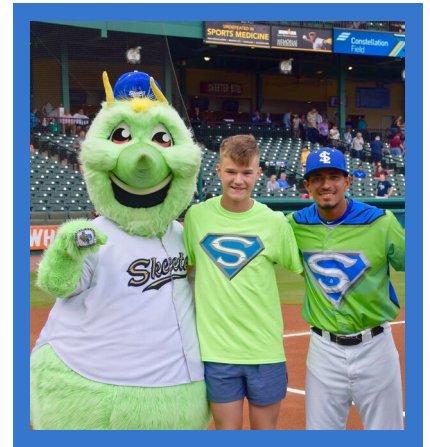


The Skeeters generously donated tickets to their May 31st home game vs. the Somerset Patriots, parking passes, a buffet dinner, bottomless beverages, and use of their party-perfect picnic space in left field for families to congregate and enjoy the game, all free of charge! Skeeters partner **Leonetti Graphics** provided families with t-shirts matching the theme of the players' jerseys for that night's game, which virtually illuminated the outfield in a sea of neon green. The theme of the game was Superhero Night and it could not have been a better fit for describing our Candlelighters families! The back of the shirts read 'Not All Superheroes Wear Capes' and everyone was offered a superhero mask (generously donated by residents of the **Greatwood neighborhood**) as they walked in.

Our families exemplify extraordinary superpowers as they journey through childhood cancer. It was inspiring to have long-term survivor **Alden Duncan** throw out the ceremonial first pitch of the night! Alden was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia at age 4 and fought a long battle to finally get into remission. He is now 14-years-old, just started high school, and is an all-star athlete!

The night ended up being a special celebration for 4-year-old **Zayn Traylor**. Last September, Zayn was diagnosed with Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia. Right before he kicked off the start of the game, the announcer read the following: "Zayn received multiple blood transfusions and completed his final round of chemotherapy earlier TODAY and rang

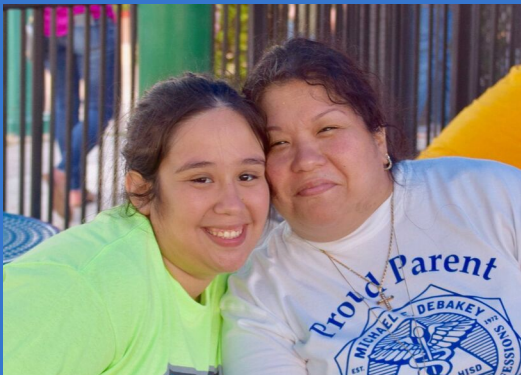
the bell to signify the end of his cancer treatment!" – and the crowd erupted with cheers and clapping! That special moment was followed by the cutest "Play Ball!" the crowd had ever seen. The Skeeters were so touched that Zayn and his family wanted to celebrate such an accomplishment at the game that Special Assistant, former Major League Baseball Player, and former Coach for the Houston Astros, **Deacon Jones**, presented Zayn with a custom jersey, so he'd always have something special to remember that monumental day!



During their charity nights, The Skeeters auction off the specialty jerseys from that night's game. Skeeters fans bid on jerseys and raised almost **\$3,000** to support Candlelighters programs and events for families battling childhood cancer! The night ended with a 4-3 win for the Skeeters, families swimming, kiddos running around the playground and splash pad, and a party in the outfield watching the fun and entertaining Spazmatics concert!

Thank you to **Constellation Energy**, **Leonetti Graphics**, and to the **Sugar Land Skeeters** for treating our Candlelighters families to such a fun night at the ballpark!

A NIGHT WITH THE SUGAR LAND SKEETERS!



TAKING ON A RARE BONE CANCER: DYLAN'S STORY

by Dylan Probe, 12 years old

My name is Dylan Probe and I want to tell you about my cancer journey. In 2015, my heel started hurting when I walked. My parents were told it was just growing pains and it would go away soon. Sometimes my heel would "flare up" then it would go back to normal. These "flare ups" would last for about a week, but they would always end up going away. This happened very often.

In February of 2016, I got another "flare up", but this time, my heel got very swollen and I started to limp. It lasted through the summer and my parents thought something was off – this seemed like more than normal growing pains. My mom took me to the doctor and I had a small surgery to look at what was going on in my heel.

After this exploratory surgery, the doctors found out that Ewing's Sarcoma (a rare bone cancer that affects only about 200 people in America every year) had eaten up most of my heel bone. I left school in the beginning of 4th grade and started chemotherapy that November. Then, halfway through treatment, I had a life-changing surgery where I had to have my leg amputated to be able to walk again. It took what seemed like forever for me to heal, since the chemotherapy impacted the healing process.



I finally finished treatment in September 2017 and got my prosthetic leg that December! I love to play volleyball, swim, travel, and paint! I still go back to the hospital every 3 months for x-rays of my leg and chest to make sure the cancer hasn't returned in any part of my body. It has been almost 2 years since chemotherapy ended and everything has been great. When the doctor amputated my leg, they looked at the tumor and it was 100% "dead"! My doctor said he had never seen that in a patient. That was amazing news!



Although, things weren't always this easy... when I went back to school in the 5th grade, it seemed like people's eyes were glued to my prosthetic leg. At first, it really bothered me, because to me, my friends, and my family, I was the same person, just part of my leg was metal! Even if I didn't see people looking, I just knew they wanted to. One time, I saw a girl look at me then whisper to her friend and I just knew it was about my leg. People did stuff like that all the time and it definitely did not feel good. I like it a lot more when people just come out and ask me about it, rather than stare! Now, I'm in 7th grade, and I'm used to it. It doesn't really bother me anymore! I believe everyone has a challenge they face in life, mine just happens to be a visible challenge. And besides... 10 toes are so overrated!!

Dylan has continued to impress Candlelighters with her "can-do" attitude and resilience through her childhood cancer journey! Like so many of the kiddos we meet, Dylan was faced with unexpected circumstances and extreme treatments, and she has overcome those great obstacles with strength, courage, and a positive outlook. Dylan and her mother joined us at our weekend family camp, Camp CLIFF, last year and did not let any physical differences hold her back! It was a space where physical accommodations could be made if she needed them and also a place where she wasn't the "different" kid; she was surrounded by other kids who had walked through cancer treatment. One of the many reasons we host our Camp CLIFF weekend is to bring families together who are walking the same journey. At their schools and in their neighborhoods they may be the only child with cancer, but not at Camp CLIFF. We are so proud of you, Dylan!



9 MONTHS OLD AND FIGHTING: #SAYLORSTRONG

by Desiree Ray

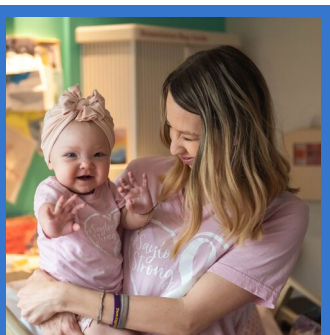
Saylor was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) on March 1, 2019. She had just turned 9 months old the day before and seemed like she was trying to recover from the flu; both of her older brothers, Colt and Carsyn, had just gotten over it. For some reason, Saylor just couldn't kick this yucky bug. The night before, she was so restless and upset. I remember so clearly my frustration, her fussiness, and her refusal to go to sleep, nurse, or do anything but cry. I was flat out exhausted. Little did I know my sweet baby was just trying to express how awful her tiny body was feeling inside.

After managing a little sleep, we woke up the next day and Saylor wanted to do nothing but lay in my arms. Limp, lethargic, and still refusing to nurse, I knew I needed to get her to the ER. The most severe possibility I ever fathomed could be wrong with her was dehydration. We spent around 5 minutes in the waiting room before we were seen by a doctor. With how lethargic Saylor was, they needed to start fluids immediately; easier said than done. The next hour-and-a-half consisted of me holding Saylor down while nurse after nurse poked a different part of her body trying to find a viable vein for an IV.

During all of this, my mind was still stuck on dehydration. The moment it all became terrifying for me was when a single vein could not be found and they told me they needed to shave part of her head to do the IV. I couldn't be strong or handle this on my own anymore. I handed Saylor to the nurses, ran into the hallway, and hit my knees to pray. I barely remember calling my husband, Holden, or him showing up at the ER. Those moments are all a blur.

It was all fuzzy until the word 'cancer' came out of the doctor's mouth. We were rocked to our core in that moment. Saylor's white blood cell count was 340,000. The normal range for her age is between 6,000-17,000. I cannot express the fear that filled our bodies. We were silent and motionless with tear-stained cheeks until the Kangaroo Team from Texas Children's Hospital arrived and took over. There was something about their presence that gave us a little relief.

Saylor and I had to take an ambulance ride to a nearby airport, board a tiny plane, and from there rush through Houston traffic to the hospital. Holden went home, threw whatever he could find into an overnight bag, and made the two-hour drive to meet us at Texas Children's. As much fear as we had in our minds and our hearts, we felt that God had placed us in the right hands when we were introduced to Saylor's oncologist, Dr. Yi. She explained everything in a way that we could understand, and she prayed with us. I know she still continues to pray for us to this day and we are so thankful to her and the phenomenal staff at Texas Children's.



After that ER trip, we spent that first month in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Saylor had to be put on dialysis and we experienced the awful side effects of mouth sores. We learned medical terms I never fathomed we'd have to know. We watched the hands of nurses so carefully treat our girl, and teams of doctors discuss the best plan and treatments for her. We are constantly in awe of how amazing our experience has been.

As I sit here writing this, we are at the end of our fourth round of chemotherapy. After her third round, we were blessed to hear the word 'remission.' If all goes well, we will have just one more round left and will be home in September. **(*Update, Saylor is home!)**

We like to say that Saylor does not have cancer, she is fighting cancer, and she has an entire army behind her. "Saylor's Anchors" is the name of her Facebook page and people from all around the world have sent their love and prayers to us through this group. We feel truly blessed to have touched the hearts of so many far beyond our small town of Sabine Pass, our own little slice of marsh heaven. The community and support we have received leaves us speechless, and I know it forever will. Our town has been hit hard by childhood cancer, but we will remain strong, especially during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, in honor of Paytlee, Anthony, and our Saylor. And we will forever remember our girl Austyn. Nobody fights this fight alone.



SUMMER SURPRISES PARTIES

Bringing some summer fun and lots of surprises to the hospitals!



Every summer, with the help of generous sponsors, donors, vendors, and volunteers, Candlelighters brings some fun to our friends in the hospital through our Summer Surprises parties! Held at both MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and Texas Children's Hospital Cancer & Hematology Center at the Main Campus, Summer Surprises is a way to give children who are receiving treatment a much-needed boost and burst of fun in the summer months.

This year, we had lots of new surprises up our sleeves! Before the parties even started, we gathered hundreds of gifts for newborns all the way up to teenagers. The Summer Surprises parties were originally launched because of the incredible overflow of holiday gifts from holiday toy drives, like the ones hosted by **two-time Presenting Sponsor Oler Relocation** and the **Houston Relocation Professionals** group! After organizing and boxing up hundreds of new toys, we enlisted the help of the **David Weekley Homes Marketing & Communications Team**; we transported 35 moving boxes of gifts to their office to be wrapped by volunteers.

On July 17th, we filled the MDACCCH Pedi Dome with arts and crafts stations, a DJ, a fun photobooth, face painting, the best popsicles in town, lunch and dessert, had a visit from Belle and The Wasp, and handed out gifts for each kiddo and their siblings! Without the support and manpower from our generous Presenting Sponsor group, **Adam's Angels**, this event would not have been possible! Special thank you to the vendors who donated their goods and services: **KICPOPS**, **Texas Fun Face Painting**, **UR Photo Booths**, **Houston Cosplay for Charity**, **Princess Party Productions**, **Bash Sugar Land**, **The Farciert Family**, and photographer **Brittany Maddox**. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers from **Adam's Angels**, **David Weekley Homes Design Team** and **The Lewis-Jackson Family**. We had a blast partying with more families than ever at our MD Anderson party!

One week later on July 23rd, with the help of **Presenting Sponsor Oler Relocation** (who graciously purchased gift cards for teens, the catered lunch, and brought a group of volunteers!) we brought the party to the Texas Children's Hospital Cancer Center clinic! We made adorable lei necklaces, decorated superhero capes, painted cactus canvases, and tie-dyed the coolest pillowcases. Everyone posed for pictures with Elsa, Cinderella, Snow White, Rapunzel, The Flash, Captain America, and Wonder Woman; we had a fun DJ, festive photo booth, face painting, yummy popsicles, yard games, lunch and dessert, and gifts for each kiddo and their siblings!

Local party & event décor expert Tiffany with **Glamfetti** donated the brightest, cheery tassels and balloon garland to give the clinic a party-perfect makeover! Long-time Candlelighters supporter **Kendra Scott** brought their mobile Color Bar, offering a beautiful, custom piece of jewelry to every teen girl and mom at the party! We are still in awe of the generosity of everyone involved in this special day.

We could not have pulled off our biggest hospital party yet without the moving services of **Oler Relocation**, those mentioned above, and **KICPOPS**, **Oliveus Photo Booths**, **UND Face & Body Art**, **Houston Kids Party**, **What's Baking? Bake Shop**, **Houston Cosplay for Charity**, **Princesses of The Woodlands**, photographer **Mary Rocha-Linares**, photographer **Michelle Sandlin**, and **Bash Sugar Land**. Special thanks to our many volunteers from **Oler Relocation**, **David Weekley Homes Design Team**, **Crosby Fair & Rodeo**, **Primm's Posse**, **DataVox**, and the **Candlelighters Young Professionals Group**.

SUMMER SURPRISES PARTIES!





PRESENTING SPONSORS



oleRRelo
GROUP



EVENT SPONSORS



What's Baking?
BAKERY SHOP



THE FARCIERT
FAMILY

MICHELLE
SANDLIN

MARY ROCHA-
LINARES

BRITTANY
MADDOX

CROSBY
FAIR & RODEO



David Weekley Homes





SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER

4

2019

| A R I S |
MARKET SQUARE

FRIDAY

8:00

PM

Candlelighters invites you to attend our Inaugural

A Toast to Candlelighters cocktail party!

Guests will enjoy a glitzy evening filled with white and gold decor, unforgettable drinks, hors d'oeuvres and fabulous views of the Houston skyline all while dancing, networking and mingling with Houston's finest young professionals.

\$50 GENERAL ADMISSION
all you can eat & drink

\$75 VIP ADMISSION
all you can eat + drink plus VIP bar
lines and one FREE raffle ticket

Special Thanks to our Event Chairs: Ashley Brooks, Amberly Sheppard & Crystal Winters

WWW.CANDLE.ORG

100% of the proceeds benefit Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Family Alliance.

CORPORATE CORNER

Gexa Energy

Gexa ENERGY®

At Gexa Energy, staying involved with the local communities in which we live and service is important to us. Electricity may be our daily focus but, we're more than just that. We're ambassadors, community members and advocates for causes who are passionate about spreading positive energy and lending a hand. For several years, Gexa Energy has been a proud sponsor of Candlelighters.

Our support for this organization comes from near and dear in our hearts, as we're a company that consists of survivors, supporters and caregivers for childhood cancer. Our efforts in supporting Candlelighters comes in a variety of ways, from our participation in the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest where we partnered with Candlelighters and hosted 151 children from Texas Children's Hospital and MD Anderson Cancer Center for BBQ and fun at the rodeo carnival, to internal fundraising, and being a sponsor of the annual Fun Walk.

Gexa Energy is committed to supporting organizations that strengthen our local community, and we are honored to have the opportunity to once again work with Candlelighters to make a difference in the lives of these families.



WITH A CHERRY ON TOP

Central Bank

Central Bank has become much more than a financial institution for Candlelighters; they are a company that goes above and beyond supporting our cause. Central Bank has done it all - they have sponsored our Lights of Courage Luncheon, their employees have hosted annual toy and clothing drives for cancer patients (enabling us to provide more gifts during our Summer Surprises parties), they have organized a fundraising team for our annual Fun Walk, they bring volunteers to many of our events to help them run smoothly, and they spread cheer during the holidays through our annual Holiday Adopt-A-Family program. They have become far more than a vendor - they are engrained in our mission and personally assist with our initiatives for families touched by childhood cancer.

So when the opportunity arose for them to host one of our Candlelighters Cares months at Texas Children's Hospital, it was no surprise that they jumped at the chance to spoil our nurse and doctor friends with a sweet summer treat! They brought in an ice cream sundae bar, complete with all the yummy toppings and delicious Blue Bell ice cream! Thank you for always supporting our efforts, Central Bank!

 **Central Bank**



CANDLELIGHTERS school initiative

*spreading childhood cancer awareness in schools
and teaching kids the importance of community*



2019 SCHOOLS

- Bauerschlag Elementary School
- Crosby Independent School District
- Glenda Dawson High School
- Episcopal High School
- Fall Creek Elementary School
- Katy High School
- Leon H. Sablatura Middle School
- St. Francis Episcopal - Lower School
- St. Martha Catholic School
- St. Mary of Magdalene School - Humble
- Webber Elementary School
- Willis High School

All across Houston, schools, students, and teachers are raising awareness for childhood cancer AND funds for families of children with cancer through the support of Candlelighters services and events!

Join our growing list of schools TODAY!

Coin Wars

ONE day for \$1

Talent Shows

Bake Sales

Staff Jeans Days

Dunk Tanks

Chick-Fil-A Nights

Toy/Gift Card Drives

For more information contact Kelsey
at kelseyt@candle.org or (713) 270-4700

CANDLELIGHTERS CARES *Nurse Appreciation!*

When Candlelighters decided to start the **Candlelighters Cares** program, the heart behind this effort was to show the hard working nurses, doctors, and hospital staff at Texas Children's Hospital and MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital just how much they are appreciated. Time and time again, we heard from families how the hospital staff plays such an integral role in their cancer journey - not just because of their expertise and specialties, but also in their genuine care, compassion, and often times friendship they provide to patients and families. Candlelighters Cares is our opportunity to say a heartfelt 'Thank You' not only from our staff, but also on behalf of our Candlelighters families.

When it came time for Nurse Appreciation Week, we wanted to do something extra special! Because of the gracious donations (totaling more than \$1,000 combined!) from five local cookie makers, we were able to gift over 300 delicious and beautiful cookies to staff at our partner hospitals! Thanks to the ladies at **Cookies by Sarah Michelle** (Katy, @cookiesbysarahmichelle), **Kookies Kat** (Katy, @kookieskat_), **The Cookie Mom** (Sugar Land, @thecookiemomtx), **The Sugar Jar** (Houston, @thesugarjar1), and **Whip It Good Cookies** (Tomball, @whipitgoodcookies) for these gorgeous, yummy cookies! [Visit their Instagram accounts to see more of their work and show them some love for donating to Candlelighters!](#) Maybe they can even make cookies for your next special occasion!



Thank You to This Year's Sponsors!

CANDLELIGHTERS CARES 2019

JANUARY



FEBRUARY



MARCH



APRIL

COOKIES BY SARAH MICHELLE
KOOKIES KAT
THE COOKIE MOM
THE SUGAR JAR
WHIP IT GOOD COOKIES

MAY



JUNE



JULY



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CANDLELIGHTERS CARES AND BECOMING A SPONSOR,
PLEASE CONTACT PROGRAM DIRECTOR CARLY BRADSHAW AT CBRADSHAW@CANDLE.ORG.



CANDLELIGHTERS CARES WEST CAMPUS 2019

Get Involved: INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS

SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



TO SPONSOR A CANDLELIGHTERS CARES DATE AT
TCH WEST IN KATY FOR OCT. OR ANY MONTHS IN 2020,
CONTACT CARLY AT CBRADSHAW@CANDLE.ORG.

CAMP CLIFF

We are currently seeking MANY
volunteers to help us have the best
camp weekend ever! We will need:

CAMP COUNSELORS
CAMP SUPPORT STAFF
CAMP PREP VOLUNTEERS
UNDERWRITERS & DONORS
FOR SPECIAL EVENTS
AND MUCH MORE!

CONTACT CARLY BRADSHAW AT
CBRADSHAW@CANDLE.ORG

DONATING GIFT CARDS

Host a 'Gift Card Drive': Gather gift cards for
groceries, Walmart, Target, and gas -- these
are MUCH appreciated by families!

**CONTACT 713.270.4700 FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON HOW TO GET INVOLVED
WITH CANDLELIGHTERS PROGRAMS & EVENTS!**

EVENT & OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Help behind the scenes for one of our events,
at an event, or in our corporate office. Call
713.270.4700 for current opportunities.

ARE YOU REID'Y TO RUMBLE!?

Houston Texans Safety #20, Justin Reid, chooses Candlelighters as TACT partner!

Candlelighters is honored to have been chosen as the charity of choice by Houston Texans' #20 Justin Reid! The Texans All Community Team (TACT) ticketing program allows players to purchase season tickets for local nonprofits, providing groups with the opportunity to attend home games, get behind-the-scenes and on-field experiences, and meet Houston Texans players. Last season, 16 Texans players participated in the program, purchasing and donating more than 2,400 tickets to local charities.

In past years, Candlelighters has been blessed to partner with former Texans player, and long-time Candlelighters and childhood cancer champion, Kareem Jackson. Last December, Jackson brought a handful of teammates to his Shop With A Jock night serving Candlelighters kids and their siblings through a one-night holiday shopping spree. One of the Texans in tow was rookie Safety, Justin Reid. The children had a blast cruising the toy aisles and choosing gifts with Kareem and Justin!

We are so thankful for a continued partnership with the Houston Texans and look forward to cheering on our new champion at this year's Texans home games, #20, Justin Reid!



ROOT, ROOT, ROOT FOR THE ASTROS

Houston Relocation Professionals Group treats Candlelighters to private tour and a ballgame!

Because of generous community partners like the Houston Relocation Professionals (HRP) group, Candlelighters families get treated to some pretty fantastic, exclusive opportunities around town! At the end of June, our friends at HRP treated Candlelighters families to a private tour of Minute Maid Park, a catered lunch, and amazing seats to take in a Houston Astros baseball game! Each Candlelighters kiddo in attendance also walked away with a swag bag, packed to the brim with fun Astros gear and a Jose Altuve bobblehead! We were honored to be invited again this year and extend our biggest thanks to our friends at HRP!



Thank you!



HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM

Spreading holiday cheer to Candlelighters families!

Gift-Giving Sponsors

With the help of our amazing community partners and sponsors, last year was our biggest Holiday Adopt-A-Family to date, serving over 1,500 Candlelighters family members in and around Houston! Many companies are already gearing up and selecting organizations to partner with this holiday season, so look no further! Candlelighters is in need of gift-giving sponsors to deliver new, wrapped gifts this December to childhood cancer patients and their family members!

Our Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program provides hope, support, and practical help to families during the holiday season. Families going through childhood cancer have MANY other costly expenses throughout the year: surgeries, doctor's visits, medications, increased gas expenses for numerous trips to the Medical Center, parking costs, and more. This heartwarming program offers sponsors the opportunity to interact directly with Candlelighters families. This contact is important for both the sponsors and the families in celebrating the true meaning of the holidays. Discover the joy of spreading holiday cheer to those families who find the season especially difficult while coping with a child diagnosed with cancer or having recently lost a child to cancer.

Donors and sponsors have been individual families, individual grades and classes or entire schools, employee groups, clubs, businesses, church youth groups, and individuals. The sponsor will be matched with a family and given a Wish List containing gift ideas for each member of the family. Sponsors will purchase and wrap gifts, spending at least \$50 per person, and will organize delivery of the gifts directly with the family.

If your family, organization, or company employees would like to buy and deliver gifts to a family touched by childhood cancer, please contact Program Director Carly Bradshaw at cbradshaw@candle.org or 713.270.4700 to sign up. If you are a sponsor from a previous year, your form will be mailed to you soon and you will be matched with a family as soon as possible.



Candlelighters Families

The Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program is open to registered Candlelighters families with patients who are 18-years-old or younger. Gift recipients include the patient, parents, and siblings, but anyone receiving gifts must reside in the home with the patient; eligible siblings are those 18 and under. Patient eligibility includes those on treatment, off treatment (within 5 years), and bereaved families (within 5 years.) If you qualify and would like to participate in this program (and have not received your Holiday Adopt-A-Family Wish List Form) please contact your Parent Consultant to register. Please return your completed forms as soon as possible to be matched with a sponsor!



2019 & 2020 Dates to Save!

KENDRA SCOTT GIVES BACK EVENTS - SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

Shop at any Kendra Scott store in the city on Tuesday, September 17th, from 6pm-8pm and a portion of the proceeds go back to Candlelighters!

A TOAST TO CANDLELIGHTERS FUNDRAISER - OCTOBER 4, 2019

Our inaugural cocktail fundraiser, hosted by the Candlelighters Young Professionals Group, at Aris Market Square.

CAMP CLIFF - OCTOBER 11-13, 2019

Acceptance & Waitlist letters will be mailed ASAP in September.

FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL - OCTOBER 27, 2019

Free Sunday carnival event hosted by St. John's School. Families, look for invite in the mail. Interested sponsors, contact cbradshaw@candle.org.

HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM - OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019

To sponsor a family, contact cbradshaw@candle.org
Families, contact your Parent Consultants to register.

PLANET TEXAS RODEO COOK-OFF EVENT - FEBRUARY 29, 2020

Families, join us at the Planet Texas tent at Houston Rodeo Cook-off!

12TH ANNUAL MARGARITA TASTE-OFF - SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

Come taste Houston's best margaritas at this annual fundraiser!

LIGHTS OF COURAGE LUNCHEON - TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020

Annual Luncheon Fundraiser at River Oaks Country Club

TO STAY CURRENT WITH CANDLELIGHTERS,
EVENTS & NEWS, FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK



Candlelighters Houston

RESOURCES FOR CANDLELIGHTERS FAMILIES

CANDLELIGHTERS MISSION IS TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WITH CANCER AND THEIR FAMILIES. IF YOU ARE A FAMILY BATTLING, RECOVERING OR BEREAVING FROM CHILDHOOD CANCER, OR KNOW A FAMILY ON THIS JOURNEY, PLEASE SHARE THESE RESOURCES BOTH CANDLELIGHTERS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY OFFER.

CANDLELIGHTERS PROVIDES PRACTICAL SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Parking assistance at the Texas Medical Center
- Grocery store gift cards
- Meal passes to Texas Medical Center cafeterias
- Gas Cards
- Help with funeral expenses

CANDLELIGHTERS PROVIDES EMOTIONAL & EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH OUR FOLLOWING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

- One-on-one peer support from Parent Consultants (2 staff at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital; 3 at Texas Children's Cancer Center)
- Support Group Meetings (weekly at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and Texas Children's Cancer Center)
- Newsletter
- Camp CLIFF (Children Loved in Families Forever) weekend family camp
- Fall Family Festival
- Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program
- Skeeter's Day at the Ball Park
- Summer Surprises parties at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and Texas Children's Cancer Center
- **Many others throughout the year!** Stay up-to-date on programs and events by joining our email and newsletter mailing list, and by following us on Facebook: Candlelighters Houston and Instagram: @candlelighters_houston

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES FACING CHILDHOOD CANCER:

College Scholarships

- Addi's Faith Foundation
- American Cancer Society
- Cancer for College
- Cancer Survivor Fund
- Childhood Brain Tumor Foundation/Brittany Truitt Scholarship
- Friends of Scott
- Jack's Ride Scholarship Program
- Kidsrstrong2
- Kids 4 Kids with Cancer
- National Children's Cancer Society
- National Collegiate Cancer Foundation
- Northwestern Mutual – Sibling Scholarship Program
- The Simon Cancer Foundation Scholarship Program
- Snowdrop Foundation
- Super Sibs Scholarship Program for brothers and sisters of children with cancer
- The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation
- The SAMFund for Young Adult Survivors of Cancer
- The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults

On-Treatment Housing

- Halo House Foundation
- Ronald McDonald House
- Chance for Hope
- Project Joy and Hope
- A Shelter for Cancer Families
- The Ballard House
- Joe's House

Transportation Assistance for People with Disabilities

- Houston Children's Charity

Grief Support

- Bo's Place
- Project Joy and Hope

Financial Assistance

- Heroes for Children Rent and Mortgage
- Houston Children's Charity Prosthetics
- Project Joy and Hope



September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

8 children

are diagnosed with cancer every day in Houston, Texas

229 patients

treated every day at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital and Texas Children's Hospital

238,000 family members

receiving direct services from the Candlelighters Parent Consultants in our partner hospitals every year

PARTNER WITH CANDLELIGHTERS TODAY TO MAKE A LASTING, MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY CHILDHOOD CANCER.



Candlelighters Houston



www.candle.org



[candlelighters_houston](https://www.instagram.com/candlelighters_houston)

CANDLELIGHTERS CHILDHOOD CANCER FAMILY ALLIANCE'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WITH CANCER AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Special Thanks To
SOUTHEAST MEDIA

Candlelighters began in 1989 with two parent support groups from the Texas Medical Center: one at Texas Children's Cancer Center and one at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital. The parent group at Texas Children's Cancer Center sought formal incorporation, and in 1993 Candlelighters was legally formed. In the fall of 1993, they invited the parent group from the MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital to join them and the two organizations merged into one. The Parent Consultant Program was developed to directly meet the needs of families at the treatment centers and to inform them of potential resources. Our programs and services extend beyond the hospital walls with our Family Camp, Adopt-A-Family, Fall Festival, Candlelighters Newsletter, and other special events. Over the years, we have learned how critically valuable it is for our Parent Consultants to be able to directly impact families through emotional support, parking assistance, meal passes, gas cards, and more. It is our greatest honor and privilege to bring this type of comfort and hope to childhood cancer families.